

Before the start of any learning activity, students are likely to ask, “Are we getting a grade for this?” One of the challenges in this work is to develop a variety of meaningful ways to assess students’ learning.

## Assessing Learning within a Lesson

Through direct questioning, class participation, and discussion, you should be able to get a sense of whether or not your students are grasping the key ideas of each lesson. The Debriefing section of each lesson provides the key concepts of each individual lesson.

## Grading Students

Whether you’re teaching several lessons, a longer unit, or a quarter or semester course, you might want to consider using a combination of these grading criteria in your class.

\_\_\_\_\_ % *Class Participation*

### 1. Developing Participation Criteria

Taking cues from agreements that you have established in the class with students, you might develop a list of specific behaviors and attitudes that indicate active participation in class. This list might include:

- participating in role plays
- raising thoughtful questions and making comments that help you and the class reach a deeper understanding of an issue or topic of discussion
- taking a leadership role in carrying out an activity
- giving helpful feedback about class activities and experiences
- participating in debriefing and discussion of lesson activities
- taking on various roles and responsibilities in small-group activities
- sharing personal reflections with others in small and larger groups
- helping to set up activities, distribute materials, and clean up
- giving words of encouragement to other students
- laughter and a good sense of humor
- showing appreciation for other students’ contributions
- participation in problem solving when issues and concerns arise that affect the group and the class
- willingness to volunteer when help is needed
- ability to focus on a task and complete it
- sharing responsibility within a group, encouraging all students within the group to participate
- taking a risk to try out things that are new and challenging
- friendliness toward other class members
- positive energy when the group needs it
- taking turns recording and documenting small-group work
- ability to work effectively with different students
- showing patience with students who may approach an activity differently

- writing thoughtful reflections when written responses are part of a class activity
- listening to others without interrupting
- respecting other people’s privacy and willingness to ask questions or admit confusion
- ability to shift gears from one activity or one way of working to another
- speaking openly and honestly to make others aware of a concern or problem
- being on time for class
- being able to stop and come to closure of an activity when time is up

## 2. Teacher Feedback and Assessment

You might want to type the above list on a sheet that you can duplicate, so that you have a participation log sheet for each student. Jot down observations of specific behaviors on each student’s log sheet that give a snapshot of their participation skills. This snapshot can be a vehicle for giving students personal feedback throughout the class. It can also serve as a starting point for setting goals and checking in on how students are meeting chosen goals, and it can be used when you have conferences with individual students about their participation grades.

## 3. Student Self-Assessment

Students can also use the criteria list to assess their participation in a number of ways:

- Identify the participation strengths that you already bring to class
- Identify ways to participate that will be challenging for you
- Set goals for what you want to do better
- Reflect back on ways that your participation in class has changed and how those changes have affected how you think and feel about the class and your peers
- Write about one way that you’ve participated in class that has made a positive difference—something you’ve done or said that has helped make the class a better learning community for everyone

## 4. Group Assessment

Keep reviewing and assessing how well the group is keeping agreements you’ve made together, inviting students to suggest ideas that can help the group with particular agreements that are hard to keep consistently.

Using your agreements as a guide, ask students on an occasional basis to assess what they’ve done and experienced in class that reflects how they are adhering to these agreements.

### \_\_\_\_\_ % Skills Assessment

1. Students can form groups to choose specific skills to demonstrate in a role play or a dramatic skit and videotape it for the class.

2. Students can identify three skills they want to improve and use successfully throughout the course. Students can write about how they have experienced using the skills effectively and also write about situations in which using the skills would have made a positive difference in the outcome of a bullying or harassment situation. The teacher also notes situations in which he or she has observed the student using the skills successfully or situations in which using a particular skill might have made a positive difference.
3. Choose to write about a passage from a novel, short story, or play that illustrates how characters' use of skills in bullying or harassment situations helped them to resolve an issue effectively or how their lack of skills escalated the situation.
4. Choose a video clip from a comedy or drama on TV that illustrates how characters' use of skills in a bullying or harassment situation helped them deal with it successfully or how their lack of skills escalated the situation.
5. Select video clips from film or TV to write about, first analyzing the bullying or harassment situation and then making suggestions about how the parties might deal with the situations successfully.

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*% Projects (A Sampling of Possible Projects)*

1. Students can create a project that illustrates use of skills or lack of skills in dealing with a harassment or bullying situation. For example:
  - Take photographs that show respectful behavior at work in your community or videotape an interview with someone in the community who models anti-bullying behavior.
  - Observe how students bully and harass throughout the day, in classes, in public spaces, etc.
  - Write a story, script, or case study that shows an example of someone dealing in a positive way with an incident of bullying and harassment.
  - Create a public service announcement, advertisement, or video that communicates a message to young people that being an ally to someone being bullied or harassed is a cool thing to do.
  - Design an "Anti-Bullying Tool Kit" that includes the tools and skills your group thinks people need to deal with these issues. Try to use objects to represent the tools; if you can't locate the actual objects, make pictorial representations.
  - Create a TV ad to sell the "Anti-Bullying Tool Kit." This kit has the tools and skills that help people deal with harassment and bullying. Consider making an infomercial.
  - Design a "Bullying Buster." In your group, identify at least five qualities you think someone needs to confront bullying behavior. Create a poster that illustrates what such a "Bullying Buster" would look like.
  - Write a rap song that describes skills that people need to deal with bullying and harassment and that tries to convince them that being an ally for others is cool. Rehearse and perform your song for the class.

- Draw a cartoon or poster that would raise students' awareness of recognizing and dealing with bullying and harassing behavior.
  - Stage photographs with the title, "What's Going on Here?" that show common bullying and harassment between adolescents or between adults and adolescents that could be used for discussion in class.
2. Community Action Research Project: Investigate a community example of bullying and harassment that students are concerned about. Respond to the following:
- What is the problem?
  - What is your goal?
  - What action do you intend to take to achieve your goal? What specific outcome do you hope for and how soon do you expect to achieve it?
  - After you have discussed the issue with key individuals and groups, identify other steps your class can take to achieve your goal.
  - Why is this a good idea? Why would people in the community support this outcome?
  - What is the root cause of the problem? (Lack of resources; clash of values, beliefs, personalities, etc.)
  - Who is presently affected by the problem?
  - What evidence proves that the problem exists and that specific groups are affected by it?
  - Who else may be affected if the problem is not resolved?
  - What key individuals and groups need to be part of the problem-solving process? What key resources does each individual or group have that could help you? What decision-making powers do they have?
  - Identify three key people or groups who could help you achieve your goal. List at least one common interest you have with each person or group.
  - What steps do you need to take before discussing the problem with key individuals or groups? (e.g., documenting the extent of the problem; developing a survey, proposal, or petition; preparing a presentation; interviewing people who could help you get the facts; publicizing a town meeting; identifying key decision-makers needed to approve the necessary change.)

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*% Journal Entries*

You may want students to keep journals throughout the lessons to reflect on their experiences in the class, what they notice as a consequence of being in the class, and how they connect what they are learning in class to their own lives.

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*% Final Written Assessment of the Class*

See the following Course Assessment Questionnaire (p. 16).

# COURSE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

There are several ways that you can use these assessment questions with students:

- Choose five to ten of these questions for a written assessment.
  - Give students the whole series of questions and invite students to select five to ten to answer.
  - Select some questions for discussion in small and large groups (you might want to tape-record responses) and select some questions for written reflection.
  - Give students the whole series of questions and select a few that you want all students to answer. Invite students to select a few additional questions that they would like to answer.
1. What are three things you want to remember most from these lessons?
  2. What are two of the most important things you've learned in this class?
  3. What's a skill you've learned and used that has changed your relationship with someone?
  4. Describe what you now know about harassment and bullying that you didn't know before.
  5. How has learning about cultural differences changed your ideas and feelings about people who belong to different cultural groups than you?
  6. List some of the things you do or say to yourself when deciding to confront a bullying or harassment situation.
  7. What responses to bullying and harassment did you use most when you started these lessons? What new ones have you learned to use? Describe how you have used them successfully.
  8. Has the meaning of any of these words changed for you during these lessons? How?
    - Respect
    - Teasing
    - Bullying
    - Cliques
    - Harassment
    - Rumors and Gossip
    - Instigator
    - Bystander
    - Homophobia
    - Ally
    - Sexual Harassment
    - Sexism
    - Exclusion
    - Racism

9. Describe one thing you've learned about yourself that surprised you.
10. What new questions do you have about harassment and bullying that you'd like to discuss and think more about?
11. In what ways were these lessons taught differently than other courses? Describe three learning activities that were new for you.
12. What aspect of the lessons, what issue, or what activity in the lessons was most challenging? Was there something in the lessons that was difficult for you to do or hard for you to confront?
13. What two or three activities did you like best? Least? Why?
14. What two or three issues and/or activities do you wish all students in your school could experience? Why would you recommend these issues or activities?
15. In thinking back on these lessons, what images and experiences stand out the most for you? Why?
16. What's one way that learning about handling bullying and harassment might change your relationships with your family, classmates, friends, or employers?
17. Describe a bullying or harassment situation that you handled differently because of something you learned in these lessons.
18. Did you feel safe enough in these lessons to take the risk of being open and honest and sharing your stories with others? Why or why not?
19. If you were to summarize what these lessons were about to another student, what would you say? Use two or three sentences.
20. If you were to give advice to teachers about what's most important to keep in mind about teaching these lessons, what would you say? Use two or three sentences.
21. Do you think these lessons will change the rest of your time in school? How? What might you be more aware of or do differently because you participated in these lessons?
22. What's one attitude or skill you hope students in this class will take with them when they leave?